

Case 3196

Ctenotus decaneurus yampiensis Storr, 1975 (currently *C. yampiensis*; Reptilia, Sauria): proposed designation of a neotype

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Article 75.6 of the Code, is to designate a neotype for the nominal species *Ctenotus yampiensis* Storr, 1975. Storr inadvertently designated a specimen of *C. militaris* Storr, 1975 as the holotype of *C. decaneurus yampiensis*, thus making the subspecific name *C. yampiensis* a synonym of *C. militaris*. In accordance with Article 75.6 it is proposed that the established usage of these names should be conserved by the designation of a specimen labelled 'type of *Ctenotus yampiensis*' by Storr, WAM R11741, as the neotype. *Ctenotus yampiensis* Storr, 1975 and *C. militaris* Storr, 1975 are used for Western Australia skink species (family SCINCIDAE).

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Reptilia; Sauria; Lacertilia; SCINCIDAE; *Ctenotus*; *Ctenotus yampiensis*; *Ctenotus militaris*; skinks; Western Australia.

1. Storr (1975, p. 235) established the name *Ctenotus decaneurus yampiensis* for a skink species (family SCINCIDAE) from Wotjulum, West Kimberley, Western Australia, registering three specimens in the Western Australian Museum as original type material. He noted the holotype as having registration number R11795 and the paratypes as having registration numbers R11796 and R11797. The subspecies was subsequently elevated to specific status by Storr, Smith & Johnstone (1981).

2. In re-appraising the skinks of Western Australia, Storr et al. (1981) discovered that a mistake had been made and that the specimens registered as R11795–11797 and published as the holotype and paratypes of Storr's (1975) subspecies *Ctenotus decaneurus yampiensis* were actually specimens of the species that had been named *C. militaris* Storr, 1975 (p. 231). The holotype of *Ctenotus militaris* was given the WAM register number R40779. The specimen labelled 'Type of *Ctenotus yampiensis*' had actually been given the registration number WAM R11741.

3. Evidence from Storr's original manuscript data sheets for *Ctenotus* specimens from Kimberley and North West Division indicates that he was aware of the error in citing the original material for *C. yampiensis*. Specimens R11795–11797 are bracketed and labelled '*decaneurus yampiensis*' with the comment: '11740–11742 not examined'. However, Storr subsequently found these three specimens (R11740–11742), originally intended to represent *C. yampiensis*, and obviously added them at the bottom of the data sheet. Registration numbers R11795–11797 have been circled and labelled '*militaris*' and R11740–11742 were bracketed and labelled '*yampiensis*'; similar emendments were made in the register. There can be no doubt that Storr was aware of his original mistake and took informal steps to clarify the identity of *C. d. yampiensis* to

conform to his original intent. Storr et al. (1981) redescribed *C. yampiensis* and revised the meristic data based on the specimens Storr had originally intended to be the type series (R11740–11742) but without formally mentioning the error.

4. The nominal taxon *Ctenotus decaneurus yampiensis* is represented by type specimens that do not fit the original description which is a composite of what even Storr recognised to be two distinct taxa (measurements derive from specimens numbers R11795–11797 and the colour from specimens R11740–11742). The name *C. d. yampiensis* could be interpreted as a nomen dubium or, from evidence in the original publication and data sheets, a synonym of *C. militaris*. Although the nominal species was recognised as 'rare and insufficiently known' by Cogger, Cameron, Sadlier & Eggler (1993, p. 169), Storr's concept of *C. yampiensis* is recorded in the Australian herpetological literature (e.g. Cogger, 1979, 1983, 2000). In accordance with Article 75.6, it is proposed that the species-group name should be conserved by the designation of the specimen labelled 'type of *C. yampiensis*' from Wotjulum, West Kimberley, Western Australia, register number R11741, as the neotype for *C. yampiensis*.

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to set aside all previous type fixations for the nominal species *Ctenotus yampiensis* Storr, 1975 and to designate the specimen labelled as the 'type of *Ctenotus yampiensis*' from Wotjulum, West Kimberley, Western Australia in the Western Australian Museum, registration number R11741, as proposed in para. 4 above, as the neotype;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *militaris* Storr, 1975, as published in the binomen *Ctenotus militaris* and as defined by the holotype in the Western Australian Museum, registration number R40779;
 - (b) *yampiensis* Storr, 1975, as published in the trinomen *Ctenotus decaneurus yampiensis* and as defined by the neotype designated in (1) above.

References

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Acknowledgement of receipt of this application was published in BZN 58: 78.

Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).